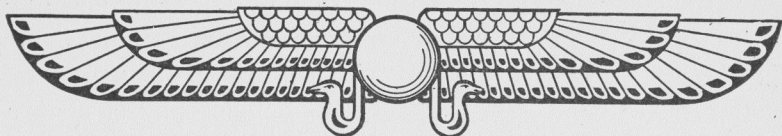


*Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."*



# MERCURY.

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## SOME NOTES ON THE STUDY OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

**W**HEN a Western student takes up the study of Hindu Philosophy, he generally approaches it in such a way that its real bearing and significance escape him altogether. This is due not to any lack of intellectual capacity or training, nor to the absence of adequate translations of the great text-books in which these teachings have been preserved, but rather to the fact that his Western education and bringing up cause him to enter upon his study under the influence of a habit of thought which colors all his mental atmosphere so intensely that, unconsciously to himself, he will read his own altitude of mind into the Eastern writers he studies, and so to a large extent miss their meaning or fail to perceive the significance of what they have to tell him. It may, therefore, possibly be of some use to those Theosophical students who may feel drawn to the study of Hindu thought, if I endeavor to point out some of the more common misconceptions with which that study is usually approached.

In the first place, then, let me remark that the more a man knows of our Western philosophies, the more thoroughly he is acquainted with the works of our great Western thinkers, the

more certain he is to enter upon the study of Hindu philosophy under the dominion of an entirely erroneous preconception, arising from the use of this very word "philosophy" in its European connotation. In the West, the object of philosophy is always understood without question to be the task of giving an adequate and complete *intellectual* explanation of the Universe as a whole, including both the objective, or as it is usually called material side of experience, as well as the subjective, or mental and emotional side. Thus philosophy, as we in the West conceive it, is essentially a thing of the pure intellect; and we should regard its task so completed when the intellectual synthesis which it furnishes is adequate, complete, and fully demonstrated. And holding this view, the only qualifications which we should demand of a would-be student are naturally purely intellectual ones: *e. g.*, competent mental capacity, adequate educational training, industry, and perseverance.

Now this is not true of those systems of Hindu thought which are usually spoken and written of as the "Hindu philosophies." One simple fact alone need be mentioned in order to make it obvious that in studying these systems we have to do with something different from what we in the West call a "system of philosophy." For the two greatest of these, the Vedanta and the Sankhya systems, make substantially the same preliminary demands upon the would-be student; and both alike insist that all the following qualifications shall be present and developed to a considerable degree in a candidate before he is fit to be instructed in the system to a knowledge of which he aspires. I will state these qualifications in the form in which they are laid down for the Vedanta by Sri Shankaracharya, the greatest of the Vedantin teachers, in his famous commentary on the opening slope of the Vedanta Sutas. They are, 1. Discrimination between the transitory and the permanent, between the real and the unreal; 2. Absence of all desire for wordly enjoyments; 3. The six mental attainments;\* 4. Desire for liberation. The reader will find full details as to these and the real significance of the terms employed in Mrs. Besant's *Path of Discipleship*; for these qualifications

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\* These are: Control of mind, control of speech and action; tolerance, endurance and patience in suffering; balance of mind and character; confidence in one's self and one's teacher.

demanding as *preliminary* to a study of the Vedanta are nothing less than the qualifications whose possession is demanded of the neophyte at the first of the great initiations on the Path of Occultism. But even apart from this knowledge, which we as Theosophists possess as to the conditions of real initiation, it must be obvious, I think, even to the most esoteric reader that the demand for such qualifications as these would be simply unintelligible, if what they led to were merely an intellectual system of philosophy, such as those of Kant, Hegel, Spencer, Schopenhauer, etc. Clearly, then, the "study" for which such qualifications are demanded is something quite different from our Western philosophies; and whether one accepts the explanations which as a Theosophist I shall offer, or whether one remains in an agnostic attitude, one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that the "Liberation from Birth and Death," to which the Vedanta is intended to lead, was, in the minds of its greatest exponents, something far more than a merely intellectual understanding of the Universe.

So clearly marked is this that even Deussen, in his *System of the Vedanta*, is struck by it, and remarks upon the deep earnestness and seriousness of the Indian thought, and on the fact that this attainment of "Liberation" is the very heart, the dominant idea, of all the great Hindu Systems. But writing for Theosophists I may perhaps now drop the esoteric standpoint once for all, and say what I have to say as a Theosophist, speaking to Theosophists.

From that standpoint, then, these qualifications are doubly significant. For they prove that both the Vedanta and the Sankhya systems were not, in our modern sense, philosophies at all, but that they represent and record the intellectual side and aspect of the Path of Initiation itself. For since the qualifications demanded for admission to the *study* of the Vedanta are the same as those which, down to this present day, are demanded of the neophyte at his first great initiation on the Path, it is clear that the actual study of the Vedanta was the same thing as the advance along the Path from the first great initiation to adeptship. And, as remarked, this is also true of the Sankhya philosophy, and so if we wish to study either of these great systems aright, we must approach them with the recognition that their primary sig-

nificance and bearing has to do with the Path of Occultism. And if we do approach their study in this spirit we shall learn a great deal more than if we take them as merely intellectual studies, and find many things becoming clear and intelligible which otherwise would be meaningless or obscure.

Another point worth noting is that all the six great Hindu systems alike are chiefly and essentially concerned with this problem of liberation. That is, as we might put it in modern phrase, with the problem of man's *spiritual* growth and evolution from the lowest and most undeveloped state of existence up to his attainment of the goal, *i. e.*, his becoming "liberated" or free from the dominion of the lower laws of birth, death, and progress, which rule in the "Three Worlds" of the physical, astral, and manasic planes. While, then, liberation constitutes the dominant idea of the Hindu system and is the problem that chiefly preoccupied their greatest minds, it naturally enough happens that many other problems of life and nature come up for discussion, and much space is devoted by each to reflecting the views of the other schools and establishing their own. All this of course has in it much of the pure intellectualism now dominant in the West; but if we always look beneath this and strive to get at the bearing of the matters discussed upon the spiritual evolution of man we shall find, with the light of Theosophy to aid us, that a great deal of what at first sight looks like mere word-spinning and intellectual controversy, has in it a much deeper significance for those who read with the eyes of the heart as well as those of the mind. And this brings us face to face with a characteristic of Hindu thought, which is so all-pervading that unless we ourselves can really work it into our mental altitude in something the same way as the Hindu has done, or at least by an effort of sympathy and imagination place ourselves in mind in his altitude, we shall never *really* understand Hindu thought on these greatest subjects at all. What we Theosophists should call the conception of spiritual evolution in the case of the Universe of incarnation in the case of man, was—and largely still is—an all-prevailing, ingrained, unquestioned, mental habit with the Hindu.

It will not do for us to give a merely intellectual assent to these conceptions, nor do the details, as such, matter much. What we



need is that these great thoughts shall permeate and color our whole mental outlook, our habitual daily attitude towards the life around us, our most secret aspirations, our most cherished wishes and hopes. These thoughts must become as much an inalienable part of our minds as the multiplication table, must be to us as familiar and matter of course as the telegraph or the railway. Otherwise we shall always fail to really enter into Hindu thought, to really grasp the meaning of their philosophy. Of course we cannot do this easily or all at once; but if we at least realize the necessity theoretically, it will go far to save us from some of the crudest misconceptions to which so many Western students of Eastern thought fall unconscious victims.

The last of these primary errors to which, for the present, I propose to allude in these brief notes, is one which most of my readers will, I fear, find it much harder to understand and still more difficult to recognize as such. For it has to do with what I may perhaps call the measure, or standard by which all our instinctive and habitual judgments are made, and error or lack of perception in a matter whose roots are so deep-seated in our natures, and which so entirely colors our habit of mind, is even harder to recognize than to eliminate when once perceived.

The abstract form in which this misconception can most easily be stated by no means exhibits its whole bearing or importance. When I say that, "The real importance of action, of work, is not to be measured by the splash or disturbance which arises on the physical plane," probably many will unhesitatingly agree to the statement. But when I proceed to point out as a corollary that the man who makes most noise, who is most active physically, who rushes about, here, there, and everywhere, who is always talking, writing, making a stir, and generally pervading his section of the world with the sense of his energetic activity and bustling life, accomplishes *in reality* much less work than many who are never heard of and who are more remarkable for their calm and placid exterior than for their outgoing activity—well, most likely the majority of those who had accepted the abstract proposition, would reject its concrete application. And yet the fact is so and not otherwise. The inner activity is always far more potent, far more effective, far wider reaching in its effects than the outer. But this,

of course, is quite contrary to our current way of feeling and thinking. For us a man who neither writes, speaks, nor agitates much is doing nothing—unless he is money-making or engaged in some recognized profession—and we are apt to measure him and the importance of his work by this purely outer standard, with the result that we never recognize the true perspective of life, but keep on plunging deeper and deeper into that false estimate of things which the Hindu calls Maya or illusion.

Now, if we bring to the study of Hindu thought this false standard, this erroneous measuring rod, it is quite certain that we shall fail to understand or profit by that study, and this, perhaps, is the most serious, because the most apt to blind, of all the misconceptions to which the Western student is liable; and though we are not very likely to be able to free ourselves from it entirely, we can, at least, be on our guard against it, and so perhaps enable ourselves to see much that otherwise would be hidden from us.

There are many other points of similar or allied nature on which I might touch; but these are, perhaps, the most important and the most easily perceived. To deal with others would require a knowledge of detail which few readers of Western magazines are likely to possess, and without a certain familiarity with which long-winded explanations would be necessary that could not but detract materially from the clearness and precision of the presentation. So I will leave the subject here, trusting that to some of my fellow students of Theosophy these hints may prove of use in rendering intelligible and significant to them the treasures of knowledge and experience which lie stored up in the Indian books.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

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Wanted—an index to volume XVII of *Lucifer*.

Any one having such index and not needing it will confer a favor by sending it to MERCURY.

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“THERE is a way of giving, seeking pleasure by it, (or) coveting to get more; some also give to gain a name for charity, some to gain the happiness of. heaven. ... But yours, O friend, is a charity free from such thoughts, the highest and best degree of charity, free from self-interest or thought of getting more.”

## MAKE A BEGINNING.

THE attraction furnished by lofty ideals is often overcome by a sense of unrelation thereto. One will listen with delight to an outline of the evolution of the individual to the point of Adeptship ; then with a sigh resign themselves to a thought of it being out of reach, a something reserved for the few mighty ones. The very exaltation of character depicted seems to hinder the perception that it is the natural evolution and destiny of all mankind who will supplement the Cosmic drift with conscious co-operation with the Divine law. To fail to utilize anas to that end is to become the failure and driftwood of our humanity.

Individual evolution is not a matter of drift. The impetus given mankind as a whole by the guiding intelligences, must be supplemented by individual effort after the middle point of a manvantara is passed. The hour of choice dawns for the individual when anas is sufficiently developed to embrace an idea of the scheme of creation upon which we are embarked. When that comprehension is gained one can no longer drift, they must choose. According to their choice they either progress to the divine atonement and come thereby into the heritage of the Man made Perfect, or retrogressing, drift upon the troubled waves of sensuous life until engulfed therein.

There is no possible way of attainment through favor or gift, on the Path, until the individual through self-effort has evolved character and faculties, through which help can be given from the higher planes of being. It is not a matter of this teacher, or that, putting us through a ceremony of initiation, or of attendance on a school for the "Revival of the Lost Mysteries." I repeat, it is simply a matter of unfoldment of character and of faculties. This is attained through intelligence, aspiration, and persistence on the part of each individual for himself. No effort of mind and will are futile. The results will be rapid, or slow, in culmination, according to the energy applied. The first direct step on the Path must certainly be in the mental effort to attain a clear conception of the Cosmos and man's relation thereto. This makes clear the reason for self-mastery and the higher life ; the need of a character steadfast, true and just; the untiring fulfillment of duty. With

understanding, a pure life, and persistent application in the search for wisdom—that wisdom that comes from the voice of the heart when the passions are stilled, and to which all head-learning must yield; for manas without Buddha is not an infallible guide, as both ancient and modern sophists prove, will surely open the gateway of the path of true knowledge. It is equally sure without training manas, strengthening the “still small voice,” and by personal energy hewing out the steps of understanding and application, we will not climb the heights. If every day is to find us chasing impressions received through lower Manas led on by desire, wandering hither and thither without more than a vague wish that “We might know a Master,” we will not in æons of time come understandingly, into the mighty Presence. I say “understandingly” because until we have evolved our own faculties we cannot discriminate. The limitations of our world are the measure of our perceptions. When purity and wisdom have unveiled our own vision we know, until then though the Master be at our side we are as the blind.

It is a matter now within our choice to apply, *through effort*, for admission to that Brotherhood which has kept the light of divine knowledge in the world through all the dark ages. Will we delay longer or shall we set about qualifying now? This is a question each one must answer for himself.

KATE BUFFINGTON DAVIS, F. T. S.

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## SYNOPSIS

Of the Course of Lectures Given by G. R. S. Mead,  
on the Later Platonists.

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[These lectures dealing with the Neo-Platonic philosophy are not ostensibly Theosophic in their teaching, nevertheless any effort to popularize to some extent the Neo-Platonic teaching, and to bring before the outside public the general conditions of life and thought during the Neo-Platonic period when the early Christian Church was gaining power and authority, cannot but be of service to the Theosophical Society in its work.]

Among the disciples of Plotinus, the most distinguished was Porphyry, a Syrian by birth and named Malchus, of which name Porphyry is a translation. He was a great traveler and visited Palestine, Alexandria, and Athens. At the age of thirty he came



under the personal influence of Plotinus. Porphyry was not readily persuaded to accept the teachings of Plotinus; but when he did accept them, he became fired with the undue enthusiasm of the convert. He conceived a disgust for his body and attempted suicide by starvation. Plotinus dissuaded him from his purpose and wrote a treatise on "Suicide" confuting the stoical arguments in its favor. Porphyry followed the teachings of his master, approaching the philosophy from the ethical side. He taught that "Nature binds the body to the soul, but the soul binds herself to the body;" in other words, the links of desire must be snapped by the will. "We must," he says, "divest ourselves of our manifold garments" which he states to be three in number: the gross body, the subtile body, and the spiritual body, all of these being limitations of the real man. These three vestures must be purified in life by the practice of the classes of virtues. These virtues were of four categories:

- (1) The practical, *i. e.*, those which kept men from law-breaking.
- (2) The cathartic—those which purified desire, *i. e.*, the subtile body.
- (3) The intellectual—using intellect as a synonym for spirit. By the use of this class men became gods.
- (4) The Paradigmatic, or the attainment of atonement with the Highest.

Porphyry wrote 60 books—15 of them were against the Christians. There were 30 replies to the 15, a fact which proves his attack to have been of importance.

His "Treatise on Abstinence from Animal Food" gives as a reason for such abstinence that the flesh of beasts incrassated the subtile body, which must be purified not alone by the elimination of gross desires, but also by care in diet, and by the listening to certain strains of music at rising and retiring. These instructions Porphyry addressed to those whom he terms "divine men," for this stupendous ideal of Plotinus and of Porphyry was too difficult of attainment for the majority. There were no rites, no ceremonies, no worship of the gods—only one ideal, one aim—Union with the Divine! Hence the system was too rigorous for the weaker, and many turned away. At this point the school of Jamblichus rose.

It was an intermediate system. Jamblichus was by birth a Syrian, and while he admitted "union" to be the goal, yet he taught that there were many intermediate steps. He had a great following and appears to have had many psychic gifts. He was a connecting link between the severity of Plotinus and the school which practiced arts, analogous to those of the modern spiritualists. He wrote books which are nearly all lost, of ten of these we have but five, only two of which are translated. He wrote the life of Pythagoras, and also a book upon the Mysteries of the Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Egyptians. The latter work is a defence of priestcraft; and urges that mysteries should be expounded to those of pure life; and that to fit persons should be confided the knowledge of the existence of the hierarchies of Beings leading up to the One Supreme Life. Thus the school of Jamblichus was instrumental in the re-establishment of the rites, including blood sacrifices. The lecture concluded by an account of the book written by Jamblichus in explanation of the Lesser and Higher Mysteries of the Greeks, in which the people were instructed as to the fate of the soul after death, and the destinies impossible for man. As many as 30,000, or even 700,000, initiated persons were present at these rites; the punishment for the betrayal of the ceremonies was death, which was always injuriously inflicted.

Jamblichus had two great disciples, one of whom arousing the jealousy of the sycophants of the court was martyred; the other taught in Pergamos and was sent by Constantius as an ambassador to Sapor, king of Persia.

The fourth lecture dealt with Julian and his instructors. Julian, who became emperor of Rome, and his half brother were the only members of his family whose lives were spared by the emperor. Julian was kept practically in imprisonment. He was reared as a Christian. At the age of eighteen he was permitted to go to Athens to study, and there was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. He became a pupil of Crusebius, who invariably concluded his lectures by warning his pupils against the magic of the senses. Julian enquired what was the meaning of this warning, and was told that it was directed against Marsimius, a follower of Jamblichus, but one who practiced ceremonial magic, in lieu of that mental theurgy taught by Jamblichus. Julian, attracted by

the report of the phenomena produced by Marscimius, became his pupil, and henceforth followed him. Marscimius was possessed of psychic gifts. He practiced divination and all those magic rites discountenanced by Plotinus, Porphyry, and Jamblichus. He was doubtless a man of great learning and knowledge. During the lifetime of Julian he enjoyed much honor, subsequently he was imprisoned and tortured. He was finally released after much suffering and died at an advanced age. Julian was made governor of Gaul at the age of twenty. The motive of the appointment being the hope that he would be thereby destroyed. The position was one of enormous difficulty. Julian, nevertheless, ruled successfully during ten years, training a body of veterans, popular both as a soldier and administrator, and rising at twelve each night to write, study, and engage in religious exercises. He was abstemious and simple in the midst of luxury unequalled by the most luxurious of our epoch.

When he had governed for ten years, Constantius becoming jealous of his power, demanded the service of the veterans, the power of his army. Julian sent an embassy, Constantius repeated his demand, and the soldiers proclaimed Julian emperor. He advanced on Constantinople, took Belgrade, and evinced his consummate gifts as a strategist and soldier. The death of Constantius terminated the strife, and Julian ascended the throne. He reigned during eighteen months, and his activity was prodigious. He cleared the court of sycophants, re-established the ancient religion, passed measures concerning education, and wrote seven books against the Christians, in which he attacks Genesis and the authenticity of the fourth gospel. He restored to the Temples their property that had been bestowed upon the Christians, at the same time he proclaimed that every man should follow whatsoever religion he desired. His versatility appears to have been marvelous. He was ruler, soldier, writer, philosopher and priest, and his capacity for work was more amazing still.

He died of a spear wound received in his campaign against Persia. The tale told by one Christian writer, that he cried out on receiving the wound, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean," is of very doubtful authority. He spent his last hours in discussing the nature of the soul with Marscimius T. Priscus.

# LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THEOSOPHY.

## Part I—Light.

**B**EHOLD! the sunrise comes, and the East is aglow with light. To the weary soul groping its way through the dark mazes of human life, the uprising of the Spiritual sun has brought strength, hope, and joy. The earth appears clothed in new beauty; the fullness of life is revealed, and the shadowy spectres that affrighted the groper become luminous forms guiding him onward from the human to the Divine. And this sun we call Theosophy, or god-wisdom.

But what is this god-wisdom? Our age questions all things, it analyzes the light of the sun itself. Let us, then, question this new day, let us analyze the light of this Spiritual Sun, let us consider the concepts of this god-wisdom which is reflected in greater or lesser degree in every religion, every philosophy, every science, in all human consciousness; and because it is reflected dimly in all human consciousness, man is always seeking a solution to the questions, What is God? What is Life? What is Man? We all feel instinctively our kinship with the Divine, therefore, we demand of every philosophic or religious system some concept of Eternal Being, of *That* which is called God. What answer does Theosophy give to these ever recurring questions? Does it place us on a familiar footing with Eternal Being, so that we know exactly what the Ineffable thinks of Brother Adam and Sister Eve and the punishment God will mete out to them when they go contrary to our ideas of right and wrong? No, Theosophy answers "Eternal, Infinite Being none can know, anymore than one of the myriad tiny cells forming the human body can cognize the nature, movements, and destiny of the planet. Yet Being is the only *Reality*. "All things that move in Being are but passing shows." Then, some may say, "Theosophy places an abyss between God and man." Nay, such an idea is a misconception. Theosophy teaches that Infinite Being which is the One Reality is the cause and permanent base of all manifestation. From It, the Universes issue forth; in It, they grow, mature and multiply;



to It they return when cometh the god's twilight. Truly, is It "beyond thought, beyond seeing," the littleness and the greatness of *It*.

"Over, or beyond, is naught!—

Innermost, Utmost, Infinite, is this!

Which shall not be beheld, being in all

The unbeholden essence! *Not the less*

*Will it reveal itself by subtile light*

Of *insight*, straightly seeking hidden truth?"

Therefore, Theosophy bids us ever seek the Infinite, the Innermost, that invisible ray enthroned in every human heart. From age to age, inspired seers tell us of the glimpses they have had of this Ineffable, by seeking it by the light of insight. Hence, Theosophy instead of placing an abyss between God and man, brings the Divine into his very soul, and shows him how to find that Divine. Perhaps the most practical picture we can form of this concept of Eternal Being is that something, which we call Space. Look where we will, our vision wanders in Space. We gaze upon a galaxy of solar universes on a starlight night and we know that all move in the immensity of Space. There are stars whose light takes a century to reach us, although light travels 183,000 miles per second, yet those far off suns shine in Space. Above, around, beyond, everywhere, is Space. The mightiest sun is but a speck of an island in the limitless ocean of Space, yet Space is not Infinite Being, because Space can be perceived by finite mind, Space itself emanates in and from Being; it is the Eternal Mother. Mulapakriti, who carries within her luminous darkness the potencies of all suns, of all beings. It is that which Schopenhauer terms the Eternal Idea; while the energy that vivifies, the motion that quickens into form the potencies of the Eternal Mother, is Will, Devapakriti, the Eternal Father. Both together form Breath, the out-breathing of the Eternal Being or Space. "In them we live, move, and have our being."

The iron age has confused several emanations and differentiations of will and idea or Father-Mother God with Being itself; and from the chaos created an impossible creature which it made masculine and called it God. It is not surprising that many thinking people repudiated the anomaly. Theosophy brings order

out of the chaos by the teaching of differentiations or the law of number—"God geometrizes" said Plato. The law of number ordains that from the One Reality shall come the two, space and motion, the Eternal Mother-Father. The two produce a third or Consciousness, having the attributes of Mother-Father—it is the Logos—three in one; then from the three proceed the four, and so on to the dodecahedron, and the numbers are reproduced on many planes, always in orderly progression. These projected thoughts of an infinite One become the architects or creators of Suns, who in their turn produce the builders of worlds, the Elohim of the Bible who "made man in their own image and likeness." As in the macrocosm, so in the microcosm. The Atma or supreme Self of each individual is as God to that individual, while the Buddhi Manas or Higher Self is Christ or Krishna. To them man can turn in sorrow and stress; through their aid man trains the animal lives, energizes the mineral lives, illumines the mental lives that compose his kingdom, his armies, his subjects, until he conquers a higher kingdom, until he becomes "One with the Father."

Next to the question, "What of God?" comes the question, "What of Life?" The materialist will answer: "Life is solar energy working upon carbon molecules." The Christian answers: "God breathed into man the breath of life." Both answers fail to satisfy the earnest seeker of truth—both beg the question. Theosophy unites the two answers dissimilar as they appear, shows them to be correct from certain planes, and then proceeds to give us an idea of the nature of life.

The inspired writer, John, says "The word was light." The Word means the Logos. The robe of the Logos the conscious *Word* produced by the Eternal Mother-Father, is "the Word-Light," and that Light becomes Life—conscious Life, for the Logos is consciousness *per se*—"Light above, life below," says the Secret Wisdom. Primarily, Life is the out-breathing of Brahm, the luminous breath which enfolds him as a robe, a garment which makes visible the Word. The sun is an active focus of this light-life. It is the heart of its own universe. Just as in physical life the heart is the center of vitality and sends out streams of life to every part of the physical body, so the physical sun

vitalizes the solar system, while the spiritual sun sends forth spiritual energy. The sun seen by our bodily eyes is merely the body, the outward form hiding the true sun of soul and spirit. The sevenfold Sun does produce life with the aid of Breath and thus Eternal Being becomes the heart-throb of all beings, and the One Breath manifests as radiant light and conscious life. Thus, *they know*, who realize in their own consciousness the light of the Higher Self; and, as the heart sends forth its stream of life in rhythmic pulsus, and as the breath comes and goes, thus life ebbs and flows, now high now low, now seen and then not seen, now streaming forth from its center, anon returning thereto; yet, ever it is life, conscious life, changing form but ever the same in essence.

The third problem is *Man*. What is this being more helpless than the animals, yet greater than the angels? Whence cometh he? Whither does he go? The light thrown by Theosophy upon these vital problems has been a sun-burst to many souls trembling in the darkness. By this light we begin to see that the individual man is only an atom of the Great Man, Humanity. The Great Man is an imperfect image of the Archetypal man—a shadow of his radiant form reflected from plane to plane in the solar architects and focused by them upon the lesser Planetary Spirits until it reaches our little earth. The law, “As above, so below,” is universal, hence the Spirit of our own planet in speaking of itself might say:

“All things are in me,  
Not I in them.”

Humanity is the planetary spirit evolving in manifest form according to the law of destiny. Hence humanity is creator and evolver of this material thought-sphere.

“The earth and the fullness thereof” belong to the race, for the race to raise with itself to more spiritual conditions; and the individual atom is again a reflection of the Archetypal Man. Each one is a creator, an evolver in his own more limited sphere. As an atom of the whole, his destiny is interlinked with the destiny of all humanity. He cannot think a good thought without benefiting the race, nor brood over an evil one without bringing evil to all.

As a microcosm of the macrocosm, each one holds within himself all the potentialities of the Archetypal Man. Some of these potentials may be latent, some in very faint action, but they are infolded in the man-nature for man to unfold. Each one is a center of self conscious life, and self conscious life is conscious thought; hence the physical body is merely an instrument through which man's thought can work on dense matter, on lower forms of life. These lower forms look to him for enlightenment. Man is their educator and trainer; through him the Manasic ray is reflected on them. Is not this one duty of human life in itself enough to make our sojourn here full of value? The complex nature of man putting him in touch with all planes makes him the evolver, the transmutor, a Karmic agent to work out the decrees of destiny. Aye, but why is life so full of sadness, of cruelty, of injustice? Here Theosophy hints at a great mystery of which we can understand but little, save that the cause is to be found far back in the thought of humanity. The Buddha calls it the Heresy of Separateness and the Rule of the Senses. As man overcomes his senses and realizes Unity these evils will disappear. He himself must change the evil into good.

Theosophy also teaches that the real man is not the physical being but the thinker that informs the body, that something that knows, feels and thinks; in a word, the invisible conscious self, the originator of all action. This real self functions on the mental plane or what we usually call the thought-plane; hence thought is true action; for thoughts are the acts of the real self and determine all the actions of the physical instrument. For this reason, humanity must change its thoughts, ere it can pass out of suffering into joy.

From these luminous concepts of God, of life, and of man, a triple sun, so to speak, there radiates a vivifying force of seven-fold light. Some mistake its brightness for that of the triple sun from which it proceeds; for it is by these rays of knowledge that we guide our wanderings through the mazes of human error. They are: Oneness, which shows that all forms of manifestation are one in essence. Universality of Law—"As above so below." Reincarnation, which means the continuity of conscious life and its periodic manifestation in earth life. Karma, a term for the



persistence and interchangeability of mental force. Selflessness—"I and the Father are one." Altruism or Universal Brotherhood. Self-Knowledge which means the Evolution of Humanity into Divinity.

The white light formed of these rays is the light of truth. In its shining the vexing problems of daily life appear blessed opportunities, and that which we had termed misery and pain in the darkness become bright prophecies of future power and glory. Such is the might of truth's blest radiance. No more fear, for God is all and we are all in God. No more despair, for life, conscious life, is God's breath, eternal, mighty, and glorious as He is. No more hate, for truth and love bind all humanity into one. No more apathy, no more indifference for man is the creator, the transmutor. Selfish ignorance gave birth to sin and death. Unselfish knowledge must vanquish these spectres, for they are but spectres of the darkness, they vanish into nothingness in the full light of day. But the day does not always remain with us; in this sphere of change night follows the day. Aye, that is true, but it is just as true that day follows the night. The darkness of night may descend upon us; even in the day, clouds and fog may obscure the sun's brightness, but they who have seen the sun, who have understood its reality, who have felt its power, know that the sun shines alway, and that after the night comes the bright morn. Our little planet must in its revolution turn away a part of itself from the sun, but on some part the sun ever shines, and clouds and fog must pass away. That which man in his ignorance calls life is but a day, perhaps we should say a night, in the soul's true life. Humanity works not for this one day, but for *all time*. Today, our thoughts are creating ages to come; they are building the worlds of those ages; they are circumscribing the horizons of those worlds to be and weaving their destinies. Yet some ask, "Is life worth living?" No lover of Theosophy will ask such a question, but he will reverently say with Arjuna,

"Trouble and ignorance are gone! the light  
Hath come unto me, by thy favor, Lord!  
Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!  
According to thy word, so will I do!"

M. A. WALSH.

# THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

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## QUESTION CCCXLVIII.

*H. P. B. advises members of the T. S. to have no money transactions with fellow-members, as money transactions between people tend in some cases to produce ill-feeling. But when circumstances compel one to have such, should fellowship in the T. S. prejudice one's action and deprive one of a liberty elsewhere allowed?*

*A. F.* —Where does H. P. B. give any such advice as this? No matter, however, where it is given or by whom, it cannot be followed if against the palpable necessities of civilized life or in contravention of common-sense.

The T. S. opens its arms to all intelligent and devout people, and would rejoice if all such would enter it. But in that case, supposing the advice to be followed, no intelligent and devout person could have any financial transactions except with the stupid and the undevout. From so strange a rule very strange results would come.

In the evolution, under civilization, of a highly complex social and financial system, commerce and business and public enterprises like railways and telegraphs are carried on through money, and this very largely through loans, whether directly or as credit. Obliterate money and transactions by means of it, and you stop the whole machinery of social life in its remotest region. But in that life Theosophists are just as much involved as are other people. They have their living to get and their obligations to fulfil; they are subjected to business customs and State laws; they are dependent upon payment of debts in order to pay their creditors. They cannot have one business system between themselves, and another towards outsiders. Nor could this last long if they had it. Suppose Jones, F. T. S., borrows money of and gives a note to Smith, a profane. Smith falls short, borrows from Brown, F. T. S., and turns the note over to him, when due, is Jones to refuse to pay it because Brown is a Theosophist, or Brown to decline the

cash because Jones is? There are numberless cases where transactions to which no F. T. S. was a party draw several in at a later stage; are their own rights, and other people's too, to be sacrificed when this appears, and complications, confusions, law-suits to thus arise?

But anyhow, why should the fact that two men are F. T. S. preclude them from a mutually advantageous bargain? Can they never become business partners, trade with each other, lend each other money if one needs the cash and the other needs the interest? Why should Theosophy be a bar between people otherwise trustful and cordial? No doubt money transactions do in some cases tend to create ill-feeling, but so do all transactions. You cannot have contact without the possibility of friction. Yet you cannot for that reason prohibit all contact and make each man an isolated being. The true course is to impart to each man Theosophic principle, and then he will be just and fair and generous all around, to Theosophists and non-Theosophists alike.

It is ever an error to treat Theosophy as an artificial system with arbitrary relations, rather than as a statement of the world as it exists and of men as they are. It is a science, remember; not an hypothesis or a vagary. It can no more ignore the facts of social life in favor of a theory than it can ignore the laws of motion or the truths of chemistry. Nature would make short work of it in such a case. Business, commercial relations, well settled principles and methods therein, are facts as truly as are the institutions of the family and the State. Theosophists cannot be expected to pooh-pooh facts and act on fancies or notions. Any doctrinal system would at once be discredited by such practice and justly so. Besides, they themselves would soon discredit it too. For if Theosophy enjoins honesty, truthfulness, the strictest regard to the rights of others, a consistent Theosophist must be an ideal man with whom to have business dealings. If, then, another Theosophist discovers during negotiations that his associate is an F. T. S., is he at once to drop them and decline the business? Is, in short, the fact that a man is the very person with whom one would like to deal, a good reason why one should refuse to deal with him? No rational Theosophist would take such a ground or act upon it, and if he was told that Theosophy

so enjoined, he would probably scout at such an assertion as unreservedly as would a Christian who was informed that Christianity forbade him to cash a cheque for or make a loan to another Christian. For sensible men repudiate nonsense irrespective of its label, and certainly reasoners will not reject reason because they adhere to the most reasonable system of truth ever heard on earth.

*K. B. D.*—When “circumstances compel” it is Karma. Understand H. P. B.’s restriction to refer to one’s *making a claim* on the strength of Theosophic fellowship. “Money may be given by the richer to the poorer, but not lent in a formal business-like way; services may be rendered, offered, and *accepted*, but *never asked*.”

### QUESTION CCCXLIX.

*Do you not think that instead of attacking and condemning what seems to us illogical or ridiculous in the beliefs of others we had better look at the truth in such beliefs, condoning or ignoring what seems to us otherwise? I refer, in particular, to the bitterness of spirit shown by many F. T. S. towards spiritualists and spiritualism, both in condemnation and ridicule, while spiritualists have for the most part abstained from discussing Theosophy in their magazines except those beliefs which are rational and acceptable to common-sense investigators.*

*A. F.*—There are assumed here two facts of which there may be doubt,—a bitterness of Theosophists to Spiritualism, and the disposition of Spiritualistic writers to treat only of such Theosophical doctrines as are obviously rational. Many experienced persons think that the bitterness is rather by Spiritualists to Theosophy, and this because Theosophy will not concede the fundamental claim of Spiritualism that its communications are from the spirits of the dead; also that the spiritualistic magazines have by no means confined themselves to discussing such doctrines of Theosophy as seem rational, nor have conceded many of these.

But be this as it may, the general principle of right discussion is abundantly clear. There are two divisions,—the exposition of truth, and the exposure of error. And through both holds the

rule that there should be absolute fairness, together with generous recognition of every fact *pro* or *con*.

The exposition of truth means that what appears to the writer to be reality should be stated clearly, as modest suggestion rather than as dogmatic assertion, with proofs amply given, analogies exhibited, and the spirit of honest inquiry everywhere apparent. More than this: in every discussion there are considerations weaker than others, probable and not certainly demonstrable, and these should be frankly so described; and there are difficulties or objections, potent no less to the clear-headed theorist than to his opponent, and it is but fair that these should be honestly admitted in their nature and force. For if the object of effort be not victory but reach to truth, no sincere seeker can have any motive to deception of himself or others, but must welcome any disclosure of weakness on his own side as helping to correction of possible error.

The exposure of error means that mistake in an opponent, fallacious reasoning, omission of essential fact, wrong interpretation, and the like should be clearly described, though with it, of course, the full admission, in all candor, of whatever strength there may be in his position. For there is always a soul of truth in error, and one only detects the genesis of the error as one perceives the truth within. And assuredly the right-minded controversialist has no wish to impugn motive or sincerity unless facts are beyond doubt.

Applying all this to the matter of Spiritualism, it is evident that Theosophy had to explain spiritualistic phenomena upon the known contents and laws of the psychic world, and also to combat the notion that these phenomena are due to the action of deceased human beings. This was not only because fact so required, but because very serious dangers to humanity were incurred through the spiritualistic notion. These dangers, together with those threatening mediums themselves, and the incessant disclosure of impostures at "circles," necessitated much plain-speaking, though certainly no "bitterness" except to impostors, and as to them honest Spiritualists have been quite as severe. It may be, however, that Theosophical literature has not been as fully explanatory as might be desirable of the higher class of phenomena,—such, for



instance, as were experienced by Stainton Moses; and that it has been too little appreciative of the services actually rendered by Spiritualism in preparing the way for Theosophy's campaign against materialism, as also of the motive and moral quality of scientific and advanced Spiritualists. But we must remember that Theosophic literature in our hemisphere is still young, that much of its natural field has not yet been covered, that its writers have been forced at this early stage into an attitude of defense not conducive to dispassionateness, that in the comparatively small band of Theosophists there can be but few with the trained thought and fairness needed for just discussion, and that prepossessions and want of all-soundedness much characterize all men and all disputants still on our plane of development. Still, it is well to point out evils, for thus they become apparent, are recognized, and may be corrected.

*K. B. D.*—Certainly the spirit of Theosophy indicates the duty of the student is to search for the underlying unity in all religions. Brotherhood does not come through criticism and ridicule. We feel the thrill of the One life surging through all manifestation when we come into harmony and understanding of our fellows. To receive, or convey, a new impression, a point of contact must first be established. Sympathy and patience will enable us to discern the measure of truth in another's belief, that fragment that makes them hold it so tenaciously. If we have a larger perception it is then our privilege to link the larger knowledge into the fragment already possessed; thus fellowship is established and wisdom received and given.

*T. P. C. B.*—It is better to look for the truth in all beliefs than to condemn and ridicule them. We should not ignore what seems to us to be otherwise than truth, for by so doing we may err and let the chance to help others slip by unrecognized.

In regard to the Spiritualistic: we should not spend our time in ridiculing them, but in pointing out the truth, the error, and above all the danger. Our duty is to always stand ready to warn our brother of approaching danger and to lend him a helping hand. Let us not, therefore, ignore *anything* lest we fail, through ignorance, to recognize danger and then be unable to help ourselves

or others. The merest trifle (too often ignored) may prove to be the keynote of great truths, which if carefully studied, may lead us into regions of light undreamed of. No man is fond of having his pet beliefs crushed and scattered at one blow. Let us imitate the process which has been used in the preservation of the W. S. Man-of-war, "Old Ironside." Pieces have *gradually* been taken from her and replaced by new until almost none of the original vessel remains. Reconstruct the beliefs of mankind on this plan and much more will be accomplished than by ridicule and condemnation.

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### NOTICE.

Questions to be dealt with in the next and subsequent issues of the *Forum*. Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

1. *I very much dislike anything with the name "secret" about it. If Theosophy has discovered some new truths, it seems to me that they should be classified and arranged to form a science, and openly given to the world as are other scientific truths. Let facts be given as they are, without any air of mystery about them. And such facts should be thoroughly studied and understood so far as possible, before one attempts any experiments of that character.*

2. *If we judge of Christianity by its practical effects upon the lives of professing Christians, why not of Theosophy by its practical effects upon the lives of professing Theosophists? Does not the same rule hold, and is a judgment formed upon it very cheering to sincere Theosophists?*

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### T. S. ECHOES.

Spookland has been very busy lately with H. P. B. Ever since she left us we have had mediums who claimed to be controlled by her, and a funny collection, in truth, should we have if we could form into a single group the many pseudo-H. P. B.'s who have come to us from Kamaloka. The first great outburst naturally followed close on the heels of her departure, and from Australia, America and, various parts of Europe came news of her "spirit;" messages were showered on us from every quarter, alike in one thing only—their unlikeness to H. P. B. Then came a lull, but now the storm is on us again, as irrational as ever. We hear of her controlling a

medium up in the north of England, of her manifestation at Brixton, and of one most enterprising claimant who has written over one hundred and seventy-seven folio pages on a Yost typewriter, recounting H. P. B.'s eventful life in her own person. The gentleman so highly favoured by this last tricky sprite is Mr. J. M. Wade, of Boston, U. S. A. We hear also of another happy one, also from the same highly favoured land, in whom the veritable H. P. B. is supposed to dwell. Needless to say that in all these manifestations H. P. B. as spook carefully avoids the people with whom H. P. B. in the flesh was most closely connected. A good many unwary people are deceived by the very audacity of the impositions, but her pupils prefer to abide by H. P. B.'s own plainly-expressed determination that she would never use any "medium" as a vehicle of communication, and that if anyone claimed to be controlled by her we might be certain that "it was a lie." Every student of course knows that a person of H. P. B.'s occult position does not need the aid of any "medium" in order to communicate with friends.

Another point of interest that is well to recall just now are her statements regarding her own reincarnation. Over and over again she told those around her that her Master was arranging for her next incarnation, and that she was to take over the body of a youth of Indian parentage. She used to rejoice in the fact that she would not again have to inhabit a female form, unsuitable as it was for her marked idiosyncrasies, cramping her energies in many ways. It is a knowledge of this fact which has made many of us anxious to keep alive in western hearts the love and reverence for India always inculcated by H. P. B., and has made us oppose the vehement attacks on modern India that were published a year ago in America. We know that H. P. B.'s statement as to her immediate future may be relied on, and that she will return among us in due course as a modern Indian; naturally then we do not wish that worker to be hindered, when he comes, by national and racial jealousies. Let us try to draw East and West together, so that each may supply the deficiencies of the other, and never set the one against the other as a rival. Both have evolved special capacities and aptitudes and these are complementary, not antagonistic.

—*Lucifer*.

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NEW ZEALAND SECTION, AUGUST 8, 1896.—The last two months have been full of quiet, steady work, with little excitement. The organization of the section is now nearly completed, and in about five or six weeks the general secretary will be leaving headquarters to visit the different branches through New Zealand, and to open up new ground as far as is possible. One of the members of the Auckland Branch, Mr. F. Davidson, who has hitherto lived away in the country, has moved into town for a time to help

with the work at headquarters, and to carry on the routine work during the general secretary's absence; and it is hoped that he will be able to make arrangements to remove to town permanently. The various branches have carried on their activities as usual, and one very encouraging feature is that the newer and younger members are beginning to come forward. This may be partly the result of the establishment of the H. P. B. classes for practice in speaking, which are held regularly in the larger branches. They do not appear to be generally received with so much favor among the members as might have been expected, but still they are having a good result in bringing more of the members forward at the open meetings. In Christchurch, Theosophic thought seems to be spreading more rapidly and more generally than in any other part. A movement was begun there some years ago, the adherents of which called themselves the "Students of Truth." Much of the teaching then given out was purely Theosophical, though combined with certain elements which were quite contrary to the spirit of Theosophy. The leaders of this movement have left the country recently under very unpleasant circumstances; but, though we cannot approve of them or their actions, there is yet no doubt they have done much good by their teaching, and some of the Students of Truth are now coming into the Theosophical Society. There is also in Christchurch an organization called "Our Father's Church," which is unsectarian and free from dogmatism. Its platform is entirely free, as may be seen by the fact that the Countess Wachtmeister there delivered an address on Theosophy. Mr. O'Brien Hoare, who is the leader of Our Father's Church, delivered addresses on very varied subjects. Recently he spoke on "What we can learn from India," and treated the religions and metaphysical teachings of India in a sympathetic and appreciative way, which is most unusual in this country. So, though our numbers may not increase rapidly, we can be quite content to wait, seeing that the teachings of Theosophy, though it may be under a different name, are steadily gaining ground.

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TORONTO, CANADA, SEPTEMBER 7, 1896.—Since April last the activities of Toronto T. S., as an organization, have been confined to the weekly meeting of the Secret Doctrine Class and the members monthly meeting; but the members have not been inactive. Six public meetings have been held in surrounding villages, the attendance ranging from twenty-five to two hundred. Much interest, and sometimes considerable antagonism, has thus been aroused. A center, meeting weekly, for the study of the teachings was organized at one village. Social gatherings for the purpose of discussing Theosophy in an informal manner have been held at the residences of persons friendly to the cause. Short sketches of Mrs. K. B. Davis and the Countess Wachtmeister, with special reference to their work for Theosophy

have appeared in the public press. The Sunday evening public addresses will be resumed about the first of October.

F. E. TITUS.

JOHANNESBURG BRANCH, S. A.—Mr. Kitchen, whose article on "Hypnotism" aroused so much interest among the readers of *MERCURY*, writes: "Our center has had a period of pralaya, but is just now re-emerging into activity. Our members are few, but we hope to have a solid group of students and make some progress."

HERBERT KITCHEN.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., AUGUST 31, 1896.—Golden Gate Lodge T. S. held its monthly social on the first Wednesday of the month. The room was crowded and the purpose of the evening—sociability—was fully carried out. Music and recitations were also contributed, adding to the general enjoyment. The meetings of the month have been devoted principally to the study of Christ, considered from the Astronomical, Mythological, and Biblical standpoints. This subject brought out some very interesting short papers and remarks from several of the members and visitors, giving promise of what may be expected in the future from the students.

Satan has not been neglected either, but at our last meeting received, perhaps, not fully his due, but at least an attempt at it. This also was found to be a subject of much interest generally, and even of wonder to those who had only considered it from the standpoint of Christianity.

Lectures have been held regularly on Sunday evening at Portola Hall, Native Sons' Building. Three of these have been delivered by speakers new to a San Francisco audience, namely, Mrs. Alice Best of this city, and Mr. Marques of Honolulu, and Dr. Julia Button of Alameda. The subject treated by Mr. Marques was "The Human Aura," and this paper is so full of knowledge and replete with interest to students of Theosophy that we hope to have it printed either in the pages of *MERCURY* or separately in pamphlet form, so that all may take advantage of it. This lecture drew a very fine audience that filled the hall to overflowing, and all seemed deeply interested. We hope Mr. Marques will give us another lecture before he returns to Honolulu.

J. C. B.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.—Echoes come of healthy activity in Harmony Branch. August 9th, Mrs. Randolph gave a public lecture on "The Theosophy of Tennyson," of which an excellent report appeared in the *Los Angeles Express* of August 10th.

SANTA CRUZ, CAL.—The San Lorenzo Branch is now duly organized with ten charter members. Mrs. R. Blackmore, president, Mrs. S. J. Granes, secretary. The members are earnest and enthusiastic and look forward to a career of useful work. At present meetings are held every Wednesday



afternoon at the residence of Mrs. Nellie Erhdens, 145 Third and Riverside Avenue.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.—The Chicago T. S. holds its regular branch meeting on Wednesday evenings. The attendance has been fair during the summer, and many interesting topics have been discussed. On Sunday evening a lecture, intended especially for strangers, is given in the headquarters' rooms, and at its close questions may be asked and will be answered by F. T. S. present. The topics for the last month were: "How thought forces act," by Mrs. M. L. Brainard, "Theosophy in practice," "Psychic powers and their development," by G. M. Willis, and "The Three Souls," by Miss Nettie E. Weeks. Sunday at 10:45 A. M. a study class meets, devoting part of the time to reading and discussion of the "Secret Doctrine" and the remainder to the study of "Man and his Bodies." The regular attendance is about 15. Monday evening, September 7th, a social was given at the headquarters by Chicago F. T. S. The social took the form of a *bon voyage* to Miss Caroline Kofel, who leaves us to take up her permanent residence in a Vegetarian Colony in Switzerland. There were a large number of members of the Chicago Vegetarian Society present besides F. T. S. The evening was much enjoyed by all who were in attendance.

NETTIE E. WEEKS, Sec.

### A Word to the Section.

Once again, the Editors of MERCURY ask the Secretaries of the different branches to send in monthly reports of the doings of their respective centers for the T. S. Echoes. It is no longer a polite request, but an urgent demand; a demand in the name of Brotherhood. Words of cheer, of encouragement, are of vital import *now*; and what is more cheering than to hear of the doings of our co-workers, to exchange good words with them, to feel that we are in touch one with another, helping one another in the good cause? To the front, then, workers all. If the secretary is too busy to write a report he can certainly find some member who will make notes of meetings and spend half an hour to make up a monthly report. Don't say, "There is nothing to tell about." Wherever two earnest students of Theosophy meet for study there *is much* to tell about. Brotherhood cries, "Watchman! What of the night?" Let the Watchman answer.

### BOOK REVIEWS.

LUCIFER, with its August number, begins its XVIIIth volume. "On the Watch Tower," after a complimentary allusion to the American loyalists and a very flattering appeal on behalf of MERCURY, contains an interest-

ing harvest of facts: the discoveries by Prof. F. N. Cushing of relics of an ancient civilization in Pine Island, and other parts of Florida, evidently connected with Atlantis; the growth of Mrs. Higgins' school and Orphanage in Colombo; some remarks on a sympathetic article by Prof. Max Müller, on "A real Mahatman in the Nineteenth Century," an analysis of Father Clarke's article on "The Training of a Jesuit," which ought to be food for thought for those Theosophists who want to know by what kind of discipline they can attain "powers;" an allusion to a study of Mr. Andrew Lang, on the "Passing through fire to Moloch," or "The magical acts which render flames innocuous;" and remarks by Dr. Satzer of Calcutta, on the discovery of Mr. G. Lebon of a "Dark Light," or "Aura around organized beings;" "Fragments" by H. P. Blavatsky, treat of Idolatry, Avatars, Initiation, and Cycles. "The idea of pre-existence" is a welcome quotation on Karma and Reincarnation in Buddhistic countries. Mr. G. R. S. Mead gives a further installment of his study on the "Lives of the Later Platonists;" "Porphyry and Jamblichus" is still interesting, but growing wearisome. Mr. A. A. Wells closes his "Letters to a Catholic Priest," containing some good arguments out of thousands which could be addressed on the subject of, Why Christianity does not appeal to the population of the "slums." Mr. C. W. Leadbeater concludes his remarkable study on "Devachan," and closes with the welcome statement that, "the blessed state of Nirvana is not as some have ignorantly supposed, a condition of blank nothingness, but of far more intense and beneficent activity;" Mrs. Besant also terminates her useful essay on "The Unity Underlying all Religions," which will constitute excellent preliminary reading for all religious minds—whatever creed they may belong to—who wish to understand what Theosophy is; "Some information on the mysterious Cagliostro" is translated from the memoirs of Talleyrand; "An Important Letter" is a document received in 1886, by H. P. B., but never before published in full, and throwing some light on the necessity for Theosophy and the Theosophical Society; Miss I. Hooper publishes a first installment of a study on "Occultism in English Poetry;" then come the new rules of the Theosophical Society and the usual Reviews, making altogether an interesting and varied number.

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THE LOTUS BLEU, July.—Dr. Pascal begins an admirable article on "Luciferianism," a name erroneously applied to certain forms of devil worship supposed to be practiced in France. According to the learned writer, Luciferianism is divided into Satanism and Palladism. Satanism is that peculiar form of Astral insanity which we know in this country under the name of "Astral Marriage," "Spirit Mates," etc. Palladism is an evocation of nature elementals by means of ceremonial magic. Dr.

Pascal says that demon worship is truly a "rare fossil," even in France ; the excitement in regard to it having been created by certain romances and books, the first written for a literary sensation, the latter for the purpose of defaming occult societies, the Free Masons, especially. "Letters from a Theosophist to a Materialist." This fifth letter is of great interest, explaining as it does clearly and concisely the various bodies or sheaths in which functions Manas. "Mahatmas," by G. Millat, describes the "perfected man," and names the twelve powers ascribed to these exalted beings. The definition of the term Mahatma may be quoted with profit: "We may say in passing that although the word Mahatma may be and is generally translated Great Soul, it has also according to Sanskrit symbolism, the sense of *fixed* Mahat ; now fixed Mahat, or Mahat in the concrete, is Manas, as defined in the language of modern Theosophy." The continued subjects are "Secret Doctrine," "Karma," and the "Astral Plane."

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DIE UEBERSINNLICHE WELT (Supersensuous World), organ of the Sphinx Society, Berlin, has a paper on the "French Seeress," Mlle. Conedon, "A Change of Personality," from *Lotus Bleu*, Book Reviews, etc.

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RAYS OF LIGHT.—This little paper grows brighter and brighter. The July number contains, "Universal Brotherhood," a paper full of good ideas. Here is one: "Do you not perceive that instead of love—brotherly love, which should characterize men's lives—the barefooted man is regarded only as a means to an end, and utilized as a convenient ladder, whereby his booted brother may attain his sordid and selfish aims?" "Hygiene," "Choice of Food," and "The Mystery of Godliness," continued, and "Notes by the Way," complete the number.

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THE THEOSOPHIC GLEANER for July.—"H. P. B.," written by one who knew her, should be read by all who love her; "Krishna" is concluded; "An Experience," selected from MERCURY, "The Little Georgia Magnet," "The Sixth Sense" from *Pacific Theosophist*, "The Babis" is an interesting account of a Mohammedan sect.

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LIGHT, for July makes friendly mention of MERCURY, but errs as to its plan of publication. MERCURY is published at San Francisco, California.

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ORPHEUS, The Theosophy of the Greeks, by G. R. S. Mead, B. A. M. R. A. S. Theosophical Publication Society, 26 Charing Cross, London S. W. Price \$1.25

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In this work, Mr. Mead has resuscitated the theology of the Greeks, rebuilt their Pantheon and revealed to the 19th century the true mystery of their gods and myths. After reading this book, the Homeric poems become once again a Bible whose inner meaning is at one with the sacred

writings of India and Chaldea. "Orpheus" is not a work on the mysteries, for Mr. Mead says, "With regard to the mysteries themselves, I shall speak but incidentally in this essay, as that all important subject must be left for greater leisure and knowledge than are mine at present." Yet notwithstanding this disclaimer, the mystic catches glimpses of so much heretofore hidden that the book reads as a revelation. For the benefit of those who have not read the work as it came out in *Lucifer*, it will be well to give here a part of the author's introduction or Foreword: "Who has not heard the romantic legend of Orpheus and Eurydice? The polished verse of Virgil has immortalized the story. \* \* \* But few know the importance that mythical Orpheus plays in Grecian legends, nor the many arts and sciences attributed to him by fond posterity. Orpheus was the father of the pan-hellenic faith, the great theologer, the man who brought to Greece the sacred rites of secret worship and taught the mysteries of nature and of God. To him the Greeks confessed they owed religion, the arts, the sciences both sacred and profane; and, therefore, in dealing with the subject I have proposed to myself in this essay, it will be necessary to treat of a theology which was first mystically and symbolically promulgated by Orpheus, afterwards disseminated enigmatically through images by Pythagoris, and in the last place scientifically unfolded by Plato and his genuine disciples. \* \* \* Not only did the learned of the pagan world ascribe the sacred science to the same source, but also the instructed of the Christian fathers. It must not, however, be supposed that Orpheus was regarded as the "inventor" of theology, but rather as the transmitter of the science of divine things to the Grecian world, or even as the reformer of an existing cult that, even in the early times before the legendary Trojan era, had already fallen into decay. The well informed among the ancients recognized a common basis in the inner rites of the then existing religions, and even the least mystical of writers admit a 'common bond of discipline,' as, for instance, Lobeck, who demonstrates that the ideas of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Orphics, and Pythagoreans were derived from a common source." This common bond of unity is clearly demonstrated throughout the book, which is composed of ten chapters, viz: "Introduction," "The Orphic Origins," "Orphic Works," "General Remarks on Orphic Theology" (with chart), "General Outline of Orphic Theogony" (with chart of Chaldean Theogony), "Some Cosmogonical Details," "The Orphic Pantheon," "Mysteries and Symbolism," "Orphic Discipline and Psychology," "The Doctrine of Rebirth." Each chapter is subdivided into topical divisions. The book is a treasure-house of authorities, and the scholarly student will prize the extensive bibliography of given texts, translations, etc., appended to the work. No lover of Greek learning and wisdom, no student of mythology can afford to be without "Orpheus," which should have a place in every university library.

M. A. W.

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

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### ORPHEUS.

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Now this is a story for our young musicians. It is the story of Orpheus, that sweet singer of old whose voice and lyre made such sweet music that mighty trees bent their heads to listen and the stars stopped their twinkling, the better to hear. As for the flowers, they followed him joyfully ; the dull stones even would lift themselves up in delight, and some rolled after Orpheus, so eager were they for that music which awakened them into happy life. And how dearly the birds loved the gentle musician ! they loved him as much as the youths and maidens who ever accompanied him as he passed from temple to temple ; for Orpheus taught the people divine wisdom, he taught them the harmony of life, the music of noble, loving deeds. Ah ! if you could have seen these happy young folks as they danced their beautiful choral dances while Orpheus played on his seven-stringed lyre. Well, perhaps, you did see them ; perhaps you were among the dancers yourselves and some day you will remember all about it.

But we must tell the story of Orpheus and the beautiful Eurydice. Eurydice was the wife of Orpheus and most dearly did they love each other. But Eurydice died of the bite of a serpent that stung her while she slept. Her body never woke again, for her soul passed forth from it and was led by Mercury to the kingdom of Hades. Bitterly did Orpheus lament the loss of his Eurydice ; his lyre hung neglected, and his song no more awakened the hills to gladness. Then Orpheus determined to go to Zeus and ask permission to seek his loved one in Hades. Zeus could not refuse ; so Orpheus taking his magic lyre with him went down to the underworld.

The gates of Hades were guarded by a very fierce three-headed dog, the famous Cerberus, whose acquaintance no doubt you have already made. When Cerberus saw Orpheus, he growled most savagely, his six eyes flashed fire and flame, he lashed his tail in lion fashion ; but Orpheus began to play and sing, and in a few moments Cerberus ceased to growl, his eyes grew soft an



wistful, he wagged his tail joyfully and fawned upon the musician just as if he were a faithful collie and not Cerberus, the terrible.

Thus by the power of music Orpheus passed unharmed through the terrible gates ; soon he was in the presence of king Hades.

Now, king Hades was furious that a mortal should dare approach his presence. His eyes grew lurid with lightning, and his voice was like thunder. "What madness brings you here? How dare—" But Orpheus played a few strains ; Hades thundered no longer—he played on, Hades summoned his court to listen to the wondrous music. Then Orpheus called all his power to his aid, and played as even he had never played, inspired by the hope of seeing again his beloved Eurydice.

Hades grew radiant, his sombre realm seemed heaven, for the music filled its darkness with joyous happiness. "Favored son of the gods, what wilt thou in my kingdom? Ask anything, it is thine; I can refuse thee nothing," said Hades. "Great King, I come for my beloved wife, my Eurydice; grant me this boon, that she come with me to the upper world." "It is an audacious request, but to thy music I can refuse nothing. Thy wife shall follow thee to the upper world, once again to live and love in the bright sunlight." Orpheus bounded with joy, and was going to speak his thanks, when Hades stopped him with a warning gesture. "Stay, there is one condition: thou must not look back. Eurydice shall follow thee, such is my promise; but if thou lookest back upon her, thou lovest her forever. She returns to me. Such is my will." Then Orpheus, lyre in hand, was conducted to the road that led to the great gates. The air seemed full of voices crying, "Look not back, look not back." Orpheus answered, "I will not look back; "yet he sighed, "Oh! for one look. Is she really following me?" Then a voice whispered, "The great king has promised, she follows thee."

Orpheus walked on determined to keep his word in spite of temptation, but as he neared the awful gates where crouched Cerberus, a wild desire to look upon his beloved and comfort her took possession of his heart. Alas! for his resolves! Orpheus looked back!

Eurydice returned sorrowing to Hades.

Lonely, silent, despairing, Orpheus wandered to and fro the world over. The birds, the trees, the flowers, the youths, and maidens waited in vain for his sweet music. Orpheus sang no more. Zeus placed his lyre among the stars. Any bright October evening you may see it shining in the western sky.

M.